

# Chetti, a New York-Based Singer-Songwriter, on Her Artistic Influences

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By Chetti

Music is something that is so deeply rooted in my soul; it's my passion and the fuel in my engine. Having just started to immerse myself in the professional music world, there are so many artists that I look up to and careers I wish to emulate. Ryan Tedder is one of my biggest inspirations and idols. What inspires me most about him is that his music is confessional, raw and existential. That is the type of person I am. It's the stuff I value and it was the type of music I grew up listening to; it's music that touches my soul. I try and follow his path, referring both to his music and his advice on being a writer and an artist.

At the 2012 ASCAP "I Create Music" EXPO, Tedder was interviewed about songwriting, and he says, "If you're an artist, if you're a songwriter, you don't wake up one day and just give it up... This is a lifestyle, it's not a race and I want to be the one last standing."

I've never seen myself doing anything else; it's the most bizarre, beautiful thing how you just know. At three years old I knew it was something that I was going to do; by hook or by crook, it was happening. Of course as you get older, you see friends and family settle into more "stable" careers and a part of you wonders if life would be easier with a 9-to-5.

No matter what hypothetical situation I dreamed up, I knew I could never be happy if music wasn't a main staple in my life. I suppose a part of that stems from being a first-generation Sicilian American. My grandparents and father came here 52 years ago with barely any money in their pockets and worked until they were full. The expression "it's in your blood" really runs deep. My parents have always enforced passion and a die-hard work ethic, and I feel like that is what will give me longevity in my career.

I love so many genres of music; one day I'm listening to hip-hop and rap and the next it's country. I believe that listening to all different types of music opens your mind and has a huge influence on how you write and what you produce. Like Tedder says, his style was a hybrid of all the music he was immersed in, all of the different genres became this one thing that was new and special. I am constantly going back and listening to Stevie Wonder, Michael Jackson, Whitney Houston, Aretha Franklin, Gipsy Kings and Celine Dion.

When I listen to music that's attached to visceral, vivid memories is when the real stuff starts to flow for me, it's when I'm at my most raw.

The music doesn't always pour out either; there are times where I feel so extremely lost. Writer's block is probably one of the most frustrating things any artist will ever have to deal with. For me, it happens when I'm letting all of my emotions cloud my creativity. At that point, I am all sorts of jammed up, so I just like to walk away, do something I love and then come back to it. Tedder says sometimes it takes three-to-four hours to write a song, and sometimes it takes three-to-four weeks, and if there's anything I've learned thus far, it's that the process should never be rushed. I always refer to his methods because well, he's Ryan Tedder.

A part of being able to start to write was being willing to explore and embrace who I am. In listening to the greats, you hear them in their music, and I want to be that kind of artist; it's what music is about. I want to share myself with the world, for them to know me for all of my experiences, for my thoughts and for my beliefs. Demi Lovato, who I happen to love as an artist and a vocalist, stated a couple months back, "Whether we intend to or not, artists influence people of ALL ages... pop culture is a huge part of leading our generation, we have to continue to strive to change the world." I strongly believe that as artists we have a responsibility to put out good energy, to inspire people and to send a good message.

As I venture further into my endeavors and into the business, I wish to develop and evolve, but reminded always of my roots. I wish to be bonded to the people that inspire and drive me, the memories I've had and those that are yet to be made, forever growing and spreading as much positivity as I can through my story.

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